Office of the Independent Planning Commission NSW

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Dear Independent Planning Commission,

This is a submission objecting to the Narrabri Gas Project.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission, I am really concerned about the risks that fracking the Piliga pose.

My name is Kathryn Teagle, I run a general practice surgery in Newcastle. Through my work, I am exceptionally cognizant of the increase in anxiety occurring around climate change. Further, I have two adult children at a stage in their lives that would normally include considering having children. They are both reluctant to bring children into a world that is unlikely to support life in the way that we currently enjoy. Honestly, I am grieving my likely unobtainable role as grandmother but I see this as the least of the issues around this potentially terrible project. Understandably, I am concerned about the management of our emissions, our biodiversity and our future. I lack faith in our government’s decisions and motivations around gas production in a world where renewables have been shown to provide such a viable alternative. I concur with Lisa Cox who in her recent Guardian article stated: “The government has failed in its duty to protect the environment in its delivery of Australia’s national conservation laws, a scathing review by the national auditor general has found.

The Australian National Audit Office found the federal environment department has been ineffective in managing risks to the environment, that its management of assessments and approvals is not effective, and that it is not managing conflicts of interest in the work it undertakes.

I visited the Piliga in Spring last year and personally saw the devastation caused by leaks, of which 130 are expected in the Piliga project. Land is laid bare and over decades of molly coddling and irrigation plants cannot take hold effectively. The Piliga is the recharge zone for The Great Artesian Basin and is a food bowl for Australians as well as a key area for biodiversity. It is too important to risk for something we don’t need and profits we won’t see.

Obvious reasons are that this area supports species that will not survive further loss of habitat. The Piliga is currently home to an important Koala population. In last year’s fires, our iconic Koala which was already so close to functional extinction lost 30% of habitat. If the Koala is to be saved from extinction, its remaining habitat MUST be protected. The Endemic Piliga Mouse ONLY lives in The Piliga. The impact of fragmentation of bushland by roads and drill sites MUST be considered to gain a true understanding of the devastation that will occur. It has long been understood that wildlife needs intact corridors of habitat to remain viable in an are. It is unlikely that species such as the Endemic Piliga Mouse will survive.

Fracking The Great Artesian Basin is potentially disastrous. Creating fissures in the sandstone allowing contamination of our ground water will have so many knock on effects. When I visited The Piliga last year I was shown the corrosion caused by these contaminants on the equipment used to access the gas. This is controlled by pumping antibiotics into the wells. Whilst this may control the corrosion on the metal pipe work, what is it doing to the friendly bacteria that maintains the quality of the ground water that is relied upon by wildlife, farmers and population alike? Where are the studies to ensure this is safe in the long term? What happens when Santos leaves and stops controlling the corrosion and the capping equipment fails?

I have not even started on the fact that we are also potentially racing to extinction with tipping points looming whilst our government seems committed to making this a surety; it is not surprising that anxiety around this is on the significant increase.

I am not a scientist and I am confident that you folk tasked with reading my submission have access to the true data around both the potential disaster and the potential benefit that this project represents. My submission is one based on a desire for my world to be OK, not just for myself, but for the creatures, plants, biome who share it with me and very importantly those who will remain beyond my lifetime. What I know of the project is:

* It will contribute to climate change (methane is far worse than carbon) and tipping points are looming
* It will risk contamination of The Great Artesian Basin
* The Indigenous peoples of the land object to it
* The project will make it easier for more, similarly devasting projects to go ahead
* The project offers little benefit to Australians, there are many deficits including actual job losses, the economics just don’t add up to good for the average citizen
* 97% of the local community object to the project
* It will risk important species like the Koala and The Endemic Piliga Mouse and many others
* It will risk contaminating important farming land
* It will risk all of these things ongoing into the future
* There are other, less damaging, more job creating ways to create power and it is time our government embraced these for the good of us all.

Due to the above reasons and the fact that I aspire to a world where future generations are happy to continue into future generations and people like myself are granted the fortunate experience of caring for generations beyond their own, I strongly object to the Narrabri Gas Project. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. I look forward to hearing from you in regards to this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Kathryn Teagle.